

Rural Idaho Economic Development Professional Grant Program

Application Guide



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Application Guide
2016-2017**

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II. General Information

A. Purpose or Intent: The intent of the Rural Idaho Economic Development Professional Program is to build economic development capacity in rural Idaho. To accomplish this, state funds are appropriated to help rural areas employ full-time Economic Development (ED) Professionals, who with a board of directors, manage locally directed economic development programs. The Department recognizes that a minimum wage and benefit package in the range of \$45,000 to \$50,000 is necessary to hire and retain qualified ED professionals. Applicants may apply for up to \$32,000 per year for FY2017 (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017) for salary and benefit support. The Idaho Department of Commerce reserves the right to determine final award amounts.

Local matching funds will provide for the remainder of the ED Professional's salary and benefits package, training and professional development, office space, telephone, computer, internet access, necessary office equipment, clerical support, travel for marketing opportunities, and for the development of marketing materials. Increased local cash participation is needed to maximize the effectiveness of state funds and to develop a financially self-sustainable program. In the long term, as economic gain is achieved it is anticipated that additional local funds will reduce the reliance on state funds. Applicants must provide a minimum \$15,000 in cash matching funds.

The ED Professional will work on business attraction, retention, expansion, and diversification projects in partnership with the Department to achieve the economic development goals of both the rural area and the Department.

B. Definitions: For this Program, the terms below shall have the following meanings:

Department – The Idaho Department of Commerce

Program – The Rural Idaho Economic Development Professional Program

Fiscal Agent – The city, county, or their designated entity employing the ED Professional and who is responsible for requesting funds, tracking and reporting revenues and expenses, and assuring compliance with all Program requirements.

Program Sponsor – The city, county, or counties responsible for the overall management of the program.

ED Professional or Professional – The economic development professional will be subservient to the applicant's program and will be hired with Program funds (see the attached Job Description).

Economic Development Project – Any project that develops new, or expands existing businesses, creates new jobs, saves existing jobs, adds value to the state and local tax base, or positions a community to create any of the above.

Full-time – At least 30 hours per week, including the option of job sharing, provided the minimum number of hours have been met.

C. Eligible Applicants: To be eligible, applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

- Must be an Idaho county, or a group of Idaho counties and cities joining together to submit a single application; each county's population must be less than 50,000; and each applicant must commit to a locally funded cash match of at least \$15,000.

Idaho counties with populations in excess of 50,000 may apply, provided that the population of the area being served by Program funds does not exceed 50,000, the area is not contiguous to an urban community, and the matching fund requirement is satisfied.

Eligible counties and cities may apply in partnership with economic development corporations, Indian Tribes, regional planning districts, RC&D districts, educational institutions, and governmental or profit and non-profit entities. Preference will be given to applicants who organize creative collaborations for funding that crosses jurisdictional boundaries and involves private sector partners.

In no case shall Program funds be used to replace locally funded economic development efforts.

D. Deadline: Applications must be submitted via the Department's online application portal. The deadline for submitting applications will be 11:59 p.m. Mountain Time on April 15, 2016. To register for an account and receive portal access instructions, contact Jerry Miller (jerry.miller@commerce.idaho.gov) or Randy Shroll (randy.shroll@commerce.idaho.gov).

III. Program Specifications

A. Scope or Description of Work: The Program Sponsor along with a local board of directors with representation from all partnering counties, cities, and organizations must jointly agree to manage the Program. A representative from the Department shall be invited to attend all board meetings and shall be invited to participate in the hiring and performance evaluations of the ED Professional. One-third of the composition of the board must include private sector representatives as voting members of the board. For the purpose of the application, a private sector representative is a person who does not hold elective office but owns, manages, or is employed by a business that is not under the direct day-to-day supervision of a government or quasi- governmental entity. The board shall meet at least six (6) times per year and develop a specific plan of work for the ED Professional along with a plan for oversight and evaluation.

Under the direction of the Program Sponsor and board of directors, the ED Professional will perform tasks directly related to economic development projects throughout the Program area. The ED Professional will assess and document business development assets, develop marketing materials to promote business opportunities, assist existing businesses with expansion plans, assist existing businesses to deal with issues that threaten job loss, provide entrepreneurial training and support, pursue leads to recruit new businesses, actively help in listing available sites into Gem State Prospector, develop projects that will lead to business development such as incubators, business and industrial parks, organize community response teams to respond to business development inquiries, conduct marketing, and build collaborative networks to ensure maximum use of existing resources. The ED Professional will provide monthly reports in a manner to be determined by the Department and assist the board in developing a yearly work plan and budget.

The Department requires the board to develop a multi-year strategic plan and a one-year action plan. To accomplish this task, representatives from the Department will, upon request and at no cost, facilitate planning.

The Department requires the board to conduct an annual capital fund campaign over and above the required \$15,000 match in anticipation that local funds will replace the need for state funds.

B. Project Management: An MOU will be executed between the Department and the Program Sponsor outlining the responsibilities and commitments of parties regarding this Program. It is expected that continual contact with the Department will be maintained during work on economic development projects. The Department will designate a primary Department contact person for each program although the ED Professional is expected to use all Department resources depending on the project. At the end of each program year, the ED Professional and the board will conduct a review to assess progress and to initiate the next year's plan of work.

C. Program Monitoring: Each ED Professional will complete and submit monthly reports to their board and to the Department. This reporting includes business recruitment, business expansion, business start-ups, business retention, as well as activities pertaining, but not limited to: Workforce Development, Gem State Prospector, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), grants, infrastructure, scenic byways, tourism, training, marketing, and other collaboration efforts. Reports will be submitted via the online portal.

D. Program Oversight: Each Program receiving state funds must comply with the following: [Idaho's Open Meeting Law](#), including the procedures for convening an executive session pursuant to [Idaho Code § 47-206](#) when confidential private business information is being discussed; [Bribery and Corrupt Influences Act](#); [Prohibition Against Contracts with Officers](#); [Ethics in Government Act of 2015](#); and [Public Records Act](#), including provisions for the protection of confidential private business records in Idaho [Code 74-107\(6\)](#). As a rule of thumb, Program work should allow for maximum public review without breaching the confidential information of private business clients.

E. Support, Training and Maintenance: The Department will provide appropriate training sessions for the ED Professional and board and will provide ongoing assistance as necessary.

F. Method of Payment: The method and schedule of Program payments will be outlined in the MOU. Payments will be requested through the online portal.

G. Contract Term: The MOU between the Department and the Program Sponsor is for one (1) year. Applicants must reapply annually.

IV. Application Requirements

A. Statement of Need:

- The applicant should describe economic conditions that document the need for assistance in establishing a professional economic development program. These conditions should be specific and unique to the communities included in the program. Simply claiming to serve a rural region will do little to distinguish your program from others competing for these funds. Some of examples of conditions that warrant state assistance may include the loss of a major employer, the decline of a once dominant industry, infrastructure barriers, the need to diversify the local economy, develop a local workforce, shortages of affordable worker housing, etc.
- In addition to the self-described need, the Department will evaluate economic need based on the following indicators:
 - i. Average Covered Wage
 - ii. Median Household Income
 - iii. Per Capita Income

- iv. Local Property Tax Base per capita
- v. Annual Unemployment Rate

To ensure consistent comparisons the Department will assume responsibility for gathering the above mentioned indicator data for each applicant.

B. Program Organization:

- Provide the name of the Program Sponsor. Describe your organizational structure and explain how your organization qualifies as an eligible applicant for Program funds.
- Describe the area to be served and list all of the partners including all counties, cities, Indian tribes, economic development districts, economic development corporations, other governmental agencies and private sector partners.
- Provide a list of the board of directors that shows the names, contact information, board position, geographical representation and affiliation, if any. Attach any MOUs showing an agreement to cooperate among the partners.
- Document that at least one-third of the total number of directors are from the private sector.
- Provide documentation of the ED Professional's relationship (employee, contractor, etc.) to the fiscal agent, board, or other Program Sponsor.
- Describe how the program will comply with Idaho's Open Meeting Law.

C. Qualifications and Experience: Demonstrate the capacity to manage the Program. Describe successful past and ongoing economic development projects involving economic development corporations, or other public or private entities. Include a description of each successful project, the number and type of jobs created by the project, the number of businesses assisted, and types of assistance provided.

D. Statement of Work: Provide a work plan that follows the department's "ED PRO Monthly Electronic Reporting" format. Additionally provide examples of potential projects that can be pursued to develop businesses and create jobs including projects that are ongoing and would benefit from professional assistance by an ED Professional. For potential or ongoing projects, describe the role the ED Professional is playing or will play in bringing the project to completion.

E. Local Commitment and Fiscal Responsibility:

- Provide a detailed multi-year Program Budget using the budget template available in the portal, showing requested state funds for salary and benefits. Note: The entire grant of Program funding must be used for the salary and fringe benefits of the ED Professional. Local matching funds may be used to augment the ED Professional's salary and benefits.
- Identify the sources of local cash matching funds and provide a letter of commitment from each entity contributing cash. Clearly state uses of all local cash matching funds and in-kind commitments used for office space, clerical support, telephones, office equipment, and travel expenses. Identify all public

and private sources for local cash matching funds. Applicants demonstrating funding from the private sector will be more competitive.

- Describe how local cash matching funds, in the amount of at least \$15,000, will be realized and sustained.
- Identify the organization employing the ED Professional and explain how fringe benefits will be provided.
- If Program funds are to be managed by an organization other than a county, provide information showing financial stability.

F. Coordination/Cooperation: List local and regional community development, economic development, and workforce development entities and/or groups. Describe how this Program will coordinate/cooperate with those entities and what the level of interaction will be.

V. Submission

A. Application Portal: All applications must be submitted through the Department's online portal.

B. Login and Password: Applicants who have previously submitted an Idaho Gem Grant application, an Idaho Tax Reimbursement Incentive Application, or an Idaho Travel Council Grant application may access the portal using their existing login and password.

New users will need to request a login and password from:

Jerry Miller - jerry.miller@commerce.idaho.gov

Randy Shroll - randy.shroll@commerce.idaho.gov

C. Deadline: The deadline for submitting applications will be 11:59 p.m. Mountain Time on April 15, 2016.

VI. Method of Evaluation

The person preparing the application should read the entire Application Guide in order to understand the desired intent of the Program. Sections II. *General Information* and III. *Program Specifications* provide details of the Program that are important to the preparation of the application.

Applications will be evaluated and scored on three (3) general areas:

A. Need (500 Points) – Points will be awarded on a quartile basis. For example, if there are 16 applications (the top four will receive maximum points, the next four 75% of the available points, the next four 50% of the available points and the bottom four 25% of the available points).

1. Annual Unemployment (Max 100 Points)
 - a. Quartile 1 – 100 pts (The 25% of applications with the highest unemployment)
 - b. Quartile 2 – 75 pts
 - c. Quartile 3 – 50 pts
 - d. Quartile 4 – 25 pts (The 25% of applications with the lowest unemployment)
2. Median Household Income (Max 100 Points)
 - a. Quartile 1 – 100 pts (The 25% of applications with the lowest median household income)
 - b. Quartile 2 – 75 pts
 - c. Quartile 3 – 50 pts
 - d. Quartile 4 – 25 pts (The 25% of applications with the highest median household income)
3. Per Capita Income (Max 100 Points)
 - a. Quartile 1 – 100 pts (The 25% of applications with the lowest per capita income)
 - b. Quartile 2 – 75 pts
 - c. Quartile 3 – 50 pts
 - d. Quartile 4 – 25 pts (The 25% of applications with the highest per capita income)
4. Assessed Taxable Value (Max 100 Points)
 - a. Quartile 1 – 100 pts (The 25% of applications with the lowest assessed taxable value)
 - b. Quartile 2 – 75 pts
 - c. Quartile 3 – 50 pts
 - d. Quartile 4 – 25 pts (The 25% of applications with the highest assessed taxable value).

5. Average Covered (nonfarm) Wage (Max 100 Points)
 - a. Quartile 1 – 100 pts (The 25% of applications with the lowest wage)
 - b. Quartile 2 – 75 pts
 - c. Quartile 3 – 50 pts
 - d. Quartile 4 – 25 pts (The 25% of applications with the highest wage)

B. Organizational Capacity (550 Points)

1. Staff – Points will be awarded to those programs whose staff have been identified, show training and experience in field of economic development, and have a track record of success. (100 Points)
2. Core Activities – Points will be awarded based how the program will carry out core economic development functions as described in item *D. Statement of Work* in the application. Specifically, evaluators will be interested in: (300 Points)
 - a. Business Recruitment – How the organization plans on generating business recruitment leads, respond to leads provided by others, and manage site visits. (50 Points)
 - b. Business Retention and Expansion – How the organization will engage the businesses located in its communities and the services they will provide to meet their expansion and retention needs. (50 Points)
 - c. Business Start Ups – What the organization will do to reach out to entrepreneurs and the services that will be offered to help starting businesses. (50 Points)
 - d. Coordination and Cooperation – Did the application identify partners and specific partner programs, e.g. Gem State Prospector, export assistance, etc. (50 Points)
 - e. Other – What other activities will the program pursue and how will these endeavors support core economic development functions? Describe how the program will reach out across multiple core industry sectors. (100 Points)
3. Potentials and Opportunities – Points will be awarded based on the applicant's response to item *D. Statement of Work*. The ideal response will identify specific opportunities, the steps to be taken to pursue the opportunities, the benefits that will be achieved, and a timeline for completing the steps. (100 Points)

4. Training and Enrichment – What efforts will the program pursue to provide training opportunities for its board and the economic development professional? (50 Points)

C. Sustainability – (300 Points)

1. Matching Funds – The applicant will receive 10 points for every thousand dollars matching cash support funds over the minimum of \$15,000 match required in the application. (A signed support pledge from each funding source must be included with application.) (100 Points)
2. Private Financial Support – The applicant will receive 10 points for every thousand dollars of matching cash support originating from the private sector. (A signed support pledge must be included with application.) (100 Points)
3. State Funding – The applicant will receive 2 points per whole percentage of grant request below the maximum amount that may be applied for. (100 Points)

VII. Miscellaneous

A. Application Webinars: Applicants are encouraged to participate in one of two scheduled application webinars. Click on one of the links below to register for the webinar

- [10:00 a.m. Mountain Time on March 22, 2016](#)
- [2:00 p.m. Mountain Time on March 23, 2016](#)

B. Supporting Materials: A draft of the sample Memorandum of Understanding with the Department, a draft of the monthly program report, a Frequently Asked Questions page, and other supporting materials may be found by clicking [here](#).

C. Questions and Contacts: Please feel free to contact anyone on the Industry Services Team with your questions:

Jerry Miller – 208.287.0780 or jerry.miller@commerce.idaho.gov

Randy Shroll – 208.287.3168 or randy.shroll@commerce.idaho.gov

Chrissy Bowers – 208.780.5139 or chrissy.bowers@commerce.idaho.gov